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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2447
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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 8124
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2822
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 2010
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5950
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 2007

In Today's Papers

Party Lists Cause Controversy

All papers focus on analysis of the lists of party candidates who will run in the July 22 general elections. AKP leader Erdogan has removed 163 existing MPs whereas CHP took 60 off its party lists, in what papers are calling a "political facelift." CHP also positioned 30 current deputies at the bottom of the lists, making their election unlikely. Prime Minister Erdogan's statement that AKP is a "centrist" party is reflected in the choice of candidates, as several MPs closely associated with former Islamist parties were removed and more women included. Mainstream papers believe AKP is eliminating the supporters of the Islamist movement "Milli Gorus," pointing out that only three theologians were among the 550 parliamentary candidates nominated by Erdogan, but that there are 95 lawyers and 88 engineers on the party list. Mainstream Hurriyet says some AKP figures known to be close to "Milli Gorus" believe that the list was prepared under pressure from the military. The paper notes that 99 of the AKP lawmakers purged by Erdogan had objected to the March 1 decree to allow the transfer of US troops through Turkey to Iraq in 2003. Islamist-oriented Zaman says the new team set up by Erdogan will help the party change the constitution to a more democratic and civilian one. After the elections, the AKP will also prioritize solving problems with the judiciary, according to the paper.

AKP nominated 62 female candidates and CHP 52 for the July 22 elections. Forty women are expected to win seats in parliament from the two parties, though women's organizations say most of the nominees are ranked near the bottom of the lists, making it unlikely for them to get elected.

The smaller political parties nominated independent candidates over fears that they would not be able to cross the 10 percent threshold.

The pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) leader Ahmet Turk, leftist Freedom and Solidarity Party (ODP) leader Ufuk Uras, and the Conservative-nationalist Grand Unity Party (BBP) leader Muhsin

Yazicioglu will be running as independent candidates.

The High Election Board will announce the final candidate lists on June 10.

Turkish Troops Continue Operations in Southeast Turkey

Milliyet and Zaman report the Turkish military continues its buildup of troops and armored vehicles on the border with Iraq, as it continues carrying out operations around Cabar and Cudi mountains in Sirnak province along the border. Zaman says some 50,000 troops, supported by jetfighters, helicopters and tanks, continued operations in 11 provinces in southeast Turkey after seven gendarmes were killed by the PKK on Monday.

Turkey Mourns for its Martyrs

Sabah, Milliyet, Hurriyet, Vatan, Cumhuriyet, Radikal and others: The bodies of the seven soldiers who were killed in a terrorist attack on a gendarmerie post in Tunceli were returned to their hometowns following an official ceremony in Elazig. Military officers attended the funeral ceremony along with citizens carrying Turkish flags and chanting anti-PKK slogans. Mainstream Hurriyet and Sabah, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet and Islamist-oriented Zaman report that the main goal of the PKK terrorists was to blow the mess hall up while all 60 soldiers were there. Reportedly, while one terrorist was firing on the soldiers guarding the entrance, the other one attempted to enter the mess with three kilos of A-4 explosives on him. He managed to throw two hand-grenades in the compound but was shot dead by the soldiers just before he entered the mess. Mainstream Vatan highlights another fact on its front page: as always, all the martyrs were from poor families because there were no sons of politicians, generals or celebrities at this mountain top post.

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Editorial Opinion: Cross-Border Operation

Okay Gonensin writes in the mainstream daily Vatan: "Turkey is going through a politically challenging period. The country is in urgent need of stable governance and out-of-system interventions should be eliminated. Regarding northern Iraq, the defenders of military intervention via a cross-border operation have become more vocal than others. Every terrorist attack is providing more fuel to this debate. We should be very careful about the ongoing and increasing efforts to drag Turkey into the Northern Iraqi quagmire. A compilation of recent newspaper stories on this matter makes me wonder if there is a strong hand trying to divert Turkey into Northern Iraq. Turkish politics is in turbulence and there is a lack of successful management. Given the current situation, the targets of the increased terror attacks must be carefully analyzed. Ankara is responsible for lifting the tarps and sharing information with the public. Otherwise the northern Iraqi quagmire is ahead of us."

Musical Message to Turkey from the EU

Mainstream Milliyet and Vatan report that at a conference held in Istanbul yesterday, EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said "Turkey alone sets the rhythm of EU harmonization reforms. It can be a quick samba or a slow waltz, but the band and the music must not stop." Rehn also drew attention to the mutual interests of Turkey and the EU by saying "There is a wide range of geopolitical challenges and opportunities in the region which the EU needs to address together with Turkey, such as the stability of Iraq, the Middle East peace process, relations with Iran. Turkey is a cornerstone in the wider Middle East and a key regional actor in South Eastern Europe." Meanwhile, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that according to EU circles, the possibility is weak that the three new chapters on Turkey's EU bid will be opened by June 26 because technical preparations for the opening of the talks will not be completed by the date.

Editorial Opinion: G-8 Summit

Mensur Akgun writes in the business and political daily Referans: "The G-8 summit is convening with a loaded agenda, including global warming, hedge funds, the future of Kosovo and the Iranian nuclear program. Given the seriousness of every issue, it will be unlikely to see a full consensus on them all. Yet this time differences of

opinion are deeper than they were at the 1994 Naples summit. Russia, which joined the group in 1998, is experiencing serious differences with the US. Putin had enough difficulty accepting the NATO presence in the Russian backyard, and this time they cannot tolerate missiles planted from Czech to Poland. However the tension is probably not going to increase more during the G-8 summit and leaders will come up with some middle-way formulas. The world is not in post-WWII conditions politically or economically speaking. One thing is certain though: the honeymoon between the two worlds in the post-cold war era is over. The world system, even though it looks like a one-polar world on the surface, is doomed to produce new tensions in new formats."

TV Highlights
NTV (6 A.M.)

Domestic News

- About 10,000 people staged protests in Izmir to condemn terror following the PKK attack that killed seven soldiers in a gendarme outpost in Tunceli.
- A prosecutor demanded a total of 2,000 years of prison sentence for the chairmen of a building society which sold 86 apartment flats to 500 people.
- Prime Minister Erdogan will join the meeting of the World Forum of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

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to be held in Istanbul June 27-30.

- Energy Minister Hilmi Guler said Turkey was determined to complete the Nabucco project for the shipment of Caspian natural gas to European markets.

International News

- President Ahmadinejad said now it was too late to stop Tehran's nuclear program as Western powers are launching new efforts to impose new UN sanctions against Iran.
 - Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Washington's agreement to use a military airbase in Kyrgyzstan was necessary to support the war in Afghanistan.
 - Amnesty International marked the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war with a call for Israel to dismantle West Bank settlements, for the Palestinians to end attacks on Israeli civilians and for the international community to monitor both sides.
 - The Basque separatist group ETA said it will end its 15 month-old ceasefire at midnight on Tuesday, warning Spain's government of new attacks "on all fronts."
- WILSON